



EEOC News

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LITHIA SUBARU TO PAY EMPLOYEES \$360,000 FOR NATIONAL ORIGIN HARASSMENT, RELIGIOUS BIAS, AND RETALIATION *EEOC Says Muslim Former Car Salesman Called 'Terrorist' and 'Camel Jockey'*

SEATTLE – The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced a \$360,000 settlement of a workplace discrimination lawsuit against Lithia Subaru of Oregon City on behalf of two former car salesmen, one of whom was subjected to a hostile work environment because of his national origin (Iranian) and religion (Islam), forcing him to quit. The company, a national car dealership with headquarters in Medford, Oregon, also agreed to make policy changes to address any future discrimination.

The EEOC's suit (Civil Action No. CV04-1361AS) alleged that a new management team subjected the Iranian charging party to a daily barrage of slurs, including "terrorist" and "camel jockey" as well as commenting that he went to Al-Qaeda training camps. The charging party was also physically harassed, including being intentionally tripped by a co-worker, resulting in a broken nose and a knee injury. Additionally, the EEOC charged that managers made unflattering mimicry of a Chinese employee's speech and the company fired the Iranian employee's supervisor (who is Caucasian) in retaliation for speaking out against the discrimination.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment or pregnancy) or national origin. Title VII also protects employees who complain about such offenses from retaliation. The EEOC filed the suit in 2004 in the U.S. District Court for Oregon after first attempting to reach a voluntary settlement through the agency's conciliation process.

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LITHIA SUBARU SETTLES HARASSMENT SUIT*\$360,000 For Employees Alleging National Origin and Religious Harassment*

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In addition to the monetary relief to be shared by two victims and their private counsel, Lithia agreed to review its employment policies to ensure that they protect employees against discrimination; provide effective means to address complaints of discrimination; and educate employees about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

"It is unacceptable for employees to be harassed because of their national origin or religion," said EEOC San Francisco District Office Director Joan Ehrlich. "The workforce is increasingly diverse and employers should find ways to build on the assets diversity brings, not subject employees to illegal stereotypes."

EEOC Regional Attorney William Tamayo added, "Harassment is bad enough, but the Commission was also very concerned that this employer retaliated against an employee who sought to bring illegal workplace discrimination to the attention of upper level management. However, we are pleased that the parties were able to resolve this dispute and confident that the changes in workplace policy agreed to by Lithia will ensure protections in the future."

In addition to enforcing Title VII, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment or pregnancy) or national origin and protects employees who complain about such offenses from retaliation, the EEOC enforces the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), which protects workers age 40 and older from discrimination based on age; the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits gender-based wage discrimination; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the federal sector; Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

The San Francisco District's jurisdiction includes Northern California, Northern Nevada, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Further information about the Commission is available on the agency's web site at www.eeoc.gov.

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